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20 November 1952

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director for Plans
FROM: Director of Training
SUBJECT: Psychological Assessment

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DDA Memo, 4 Apr 77

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Date: 230378 By: 025

1. It has been some time since the function and purpose of Assessment has been discussed and evaluated. It is believed that the recent organizational changes and current revision of procedures and policies warrant a new evaluation of the Assessment function in light of both the needs of the DD/P complexes and the Assessment Staff capabilities. In order to define the latter, this memorandum is furnished for your information and guidance with the hope that some discussion of future needs will be forthcoming so that adequate planning and staffing can be undertaken by the Assessment and Evaluation Staff of O/TR.

2. The Assessment Branch of the Assessment and Evaluation Staff now consists of two senior psychologists, one psychologist, one junior psychologist, and one junior psychologist-in-training. In addition, there are two senior psychologists available for emergency or special assessments. Experience with the present system of Assessment indicates that there are approximately 12 to 18 man hours per case necessary to produce the final Assessment Report. This indicates that the maximum assessment load now possible is two cases per experienced assessment psychologist per week or eight regular cases. The psychologist-in-training can handle one case per week and a maximum of two emergency cases can be scheduled. Thus, the peak load of the present staff is 11 cases per week with no allowance for leave, illness nor research participation. At the present time, there are two junior psychologists in the clearance process who should report for duty in December and January, respectively; however, a three month's indoctrination period and a three month's training period are essential for them to reach even minimum production. Consequently, the 11 cases per week appear to be the maximum for at least the next 6 to 8 months. It is obvious, then, that if the demand for Assessment exceeds the 11 cases per week possible, some form of priority system is going to have to be established. Under the present conditions, the operational offices using the Assessment function are the only ones who can determine the priorities on the basis of their needs. As of this date, Assessments have been scheduled ahead until the 1st of January 1953. Although no formal request for additional Assessment scheduling has been presented, informal inquiries have indicated that there is, at present, a demand in excess of the capabilities.

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3. For your information, the present procedure for scheduling Assessments and routing Assessment Reports is as follows:

Assessment Requests for PM are forwarded to the Personnel Placement Officer assigned for that office who then calls the Assessment Branch for an available date. He then notifies the desk concerned as to the date scheduled and makes the necessary arrangements for advising the individual. He then forwards the written Assessment Request with one copy of the P.H.S. to the Assessment Branch prior to the scheduled date. The assessment is conducted and as soon as the formal Assessment Report is completed, it is returned EYES ONLY to the PPO for dissemination to the desk concerned. This same procedure is followed by the Personnel Placement Officer for NEA and PY; for WE, WH and SE; for EE; and for FE, FE/2 and FE/3. FI Assessments are scheduled through [REDACTED] office and Assessment Reports are returned to [REDACTED], EYES ONLY, for distribution to the interested desk. The FI procedure is a continuation of the procedure in operation during the period that FI was OSO. The procedure formerly in use in OPC was not operable when the new organization went into effect and the present procedure serving the former OPC complex is in accordance with the interim personnel procedures formulated by DD/P Admin. (Chief). The FI procedure has been continued because of the working relationship that had been established and in the absence of any official notification that this procedure should be changed. Although informal lines of communication have continued to exist directly between the individual requesting the Assessment and the Assessment Branch, there does not appear to be any official authorization for the direct communication. It has always been the practice of Assessment psychologists to be available to interested requestors of Assessment for personal consultations with the knowledge and consent of the Chief of the Assessment Branch. Although preliminary and informal discussions have been held with the administrative heads of the Placement Division, no clear definition of the role to be played by the Placement officers in interpreting or using the Assessment Report has been formulated. Because of the possible sensitive nature of the Assessment Report itself, it is believed that the dissemination of the Assessment Report should be carefully controlled and that some specific final repository other than Personnel or the personal jacket of the individual should be designated. It has been the policy wherever possible that an Assessment Report itself was not available to anyone else without the knowledge and consent of the Assessment requester concerned. Obviously this policy was not enforceable by the Assessment Branch once the Report left its hands. It is not believed that Assessment Results should be inaccessible to any authorized interested Agency personnel but inasmuch as the Assessment Report itself is developed to apply in most cases to a specific job under specific conditions, it should be neither readily available to possible unauthorized individuals nor given a general application. Consequently, for Placement officers desiring Assessment Results in order to help place an individual turned down by an operating office, there should be a direct channel between the Placement Officers and the Assessment Branch so that the Results can be recast in the manner which will be most useful and meaningful to them. Nevertheless, since it is the fundamental policy of Assessment to furnish information directly to the operating desk, until such time as the operating desks themselves express their willingness to allow other offices to see or use an Assessment Report prepared

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for them, we are obliged to follow their wishes in the absense of contrary official directive.

4. Historically, there have been different approaches, functions and responsibilities of Assessment. The present system seems to represent a combination of these various historical needs. As best as can be determined at the present time, Assessments are being used as follows:

- a. As a pre-employment device primarily to help determine an individual's suitability for working in covert intelligence work.
- b. As one of the means to determine the suitability of an individual for a covert overseas post regardless of his assignment
- c. As a means to help evaluate an individual's strengths or weaknesses for a particularly sensitive position under possible psychologically hazardous conditions.
- d. As a means to help define or clarify the reasons for certain types of psychological difficulties encountered in training.
- e. As a means to help define or clarify the reasons for certain types of psychological difficulties encountered in an assignment.
- f. As a means to assist the Psychiatric Division, at their request, in making a psychiatric diagnosis.
- g. As a means to help evaluate the aptitude and potentialities of foreign indigenous persons on whom there is limited or inaccessible information.
- h. As a means to help determine an individual's suitability for reassignment.

In the past, Assessment has been asked to participate in helping to determine an individual's suitability for promotion; to routinely consider all individuals considered for GS-12 and above; and some divisions have attempted to have all employees and prospective employees systematically processed through the procedure. It is apparent that no clear cut, uniform policy for the use of Assessment has been formulated by the users of the Assessment Report.

5. In order that there be a clearer understanding of the kinds of people now being processed through Assessment, a series of charts partially describing the population have been prepared and are enclosed herewith.

6. Assessment is a time consuming, expensive and painstaking process. Its full value in the intelligence business has never been properly evaluated and validated. Considerable time and effort is now being devoted to setting up methods whereby the systematic follow up of Assessment findings can be undertaken. Research on psychological techniques is slow at best and requires

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a variety of carefully controlled conditions. As long as Assessment is required to perform such a variety of functions, the possibility of undertaking adequate research to validate the procedures becomes more difficult. Recently a project has been undertaken to make a study of psychological requirements for Intelligence Officers. This project was undertaken because it was believed to be the most immediately pertinent and significant. Eventually, close cooperation will be necessary between the operating offices and the research psychologists assigned to this project in order to turn up the necessary information and it is hoped that the procedure for implementing this cooperation can be devised. Over the years, a detailed study of psychological requirements can be made on all of the various assignments existing within covert intelligence work. As each of these studies is completed, the capabilities of the Assessment Staff will be expended and more meaningful and specific information will be available for use by the covert offices. It is the fundamental philosophy of the Assessment and Evaluation Staff that its greatest contribution can be made in the evaluation and study of those individuals who are going to be expected to participate in the unique aspects of intelligence work. However, this contribution can be made only by a step by step validation of the procedures and the Assessment function must move slowly and cautiously. The procedures are not now available that can be given widespread application. There are available methods for the selection of individuals for the less unique positions in CIA which are neither so time consuming nor so expensive as the Assessment process. These can be applied and utilized without duplicating that is accomplished by the more comprehensive and detailed analysis of Assessment. It is hoped, therefore, that those who will determine the priorities for the Assessment program will decide to use the process for those persons whose assignment is unique enough and sensitive enough to warrant the comprehensive program now operating.

7. Until such time as the value of Assessment has been clearly delineated, it cannot and should not play a definitive role in any of its applications. Basically, the Assessment psychologists operate as consultants who are qualified to render opinions based upon the frame of reference utilizing the professional tools and techniques available to them. The product coming out of the Assessment period must always be balanced with all the other information available about the individual and the final determination of the suitability of the individual described is always up to the operational officers. As long as this is true, it is necessary for the users of Assessment to be continually educated as how to use and interpret the Assessment Report. Consequently, as free a channel as is organizationally possible should exist between the Assessment producers and the Assessment consumers.

8. The nature of Assessment includes implications of concern to other departments of the Agency. For example, whenever Assessment is used as a selection device, it has become involved in Personnel practices. Whenever it makes judgments about emotional balance, it has become involved with the Medical function. Whenever it makes inferences relative to the discretion, loyalty or security mindedness of an individual, it has become involved with

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the Security functions. Because of the many sides and implications of the Assessment Report, it is sometimes difficult to avoid the inference that the Assessment psychologists are usurping the prerogatives of other departments. The only way to avoid the difficulties arising from this situation is to so clearly define the responsibilities of Assessment that their findings cannot be misinterpreted or misapplied. Consequently, at some point after the operating offices have determined how they wish to use Assessment, some type of coordination will be necessary with the other divisions involved.

9. Finally, pending the benefit of a mutual exchange of ideas and further considerations, the following recommendations are presented:

a. That, as soon as possible, the DD/P direct the Chief of Administration (Plans) to organize a conference to discuss the future role of Assessment and develop official policy. This conference should include representatives from the FI Staff, PP Staff, PM Staff and such others as are deemed necessary. The Chief of Training and his representatives will cooperate with and participate in such a conference in every way possible.

b. That in view of the limited capabilities of the present and immediately foreseeable Assessment Staff, a priority system for scheduling assessments be established.

c. That a clearly defined system or systems of scheduling individuals for assessment be devised which will insure dissemination of Assessment Reports on a need to know basis and will provide easy communicability between the Assessment consumer and the Assessment psychologists.

d. That, because of the expense and comprehensiveness of the Assessment process, as now devised, its use be limited to: (1) the evaluation of persons being considered for sensitive positions in the covert offices where psychological hazards do or may exist and where detailed psychological information is useful and pertinent; (2) with foreign indigenous persons on whom there is limited or inaccessible information and (3) in prospective employees whenever a prediction as to their suitability for clandestine or covert work is desired.

e. That, since Assessment as a professional function is dependent upon research and validation conducted by trained professional psychologists, some means be established to insure a follow up and validation procedure compatible with both scientific principles and security or compartmentalization.

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f. That as soon as practicable, the relationship between Assessment and other components of the Agency with similar or overlapping responsibilities be defined and clearly delineated.

g. That a fundamental principle be established that Assessment is not a definitive function but an advisory function.

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1. Chart No. 1 (Offices referring assessments)
2. Chart No. 2 (Sex and age of candidates)
3. Chart No. 3 (GS level of assessment cases)
4. Chart No. 4 (Military and other levels)
5. Chart No. 5 (Projected job assignments)
6. Chart No. 6 (Projected Job assignments)

cc: DDP/ADMIN/C

cc: C/FI

cc: C/PM

cc: C/PP

AE/TR(S)/JWG:mmm (4 November 1952)

Distribution:

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